



San Diego City Attorney **CASEY GWINN**

MEDIA RELEASE

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CITY ATTORNEY SETTLES FUEL SPILL CASE

A South Dakota company will pay \$5,000 in penalties and costs and must implement a safety plan to settle a lawsuit stemming from a 300-gallon fuel spill in San Diego Bay. The company, Quest, Inc., temporarily docked its research vessel *Quest* at Campbell Shipyard in San Diego Bay in January 1998. The spill occurred on January 6, 1998, when the ship's engineer overfilled the fuel tank.

The San Diego City Attorney's Consumer and Environmental Protection Unit prosecuted the case, following an investigation by the United States Coast Guard and the California Department of Fish and Game's Office of Oil Spill Prevention and Response. The Coast Guard previously fined the company for two separate fuel spills in the state of Washington. The earlier spills also resulted from overfilled fuel tanks.

Under California law, boat operators must report all of their oil and fuel spills to both the Coast Guard and the California Office of Emergency Service. The quicker a spill is reported, the faster the cleanup response can begin, resulting in less damage to marine life, the environment, and the public. The failure of a boat operator to report a spill may result in criminal prosecution with fines up to \$250,000 and a possible prison term.

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